

THE AFRICAN AND THE CINEMA

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*An Account of the work of the Bantu
Educational Cinema Experiment during the period
March 1935 to May 1937*

By

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AND

G. C. LATHAM (*Editor*)

WITH A FOREWORD BY

J. MERLE DAVIS

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE number of people to whom the organizers are indebted for help in the carrying out of this experiment is far too great to allow of individual acknowledgment. It has been possible to mention in the text only a few of the large numbers of officials, missionaries, and others in Africa who by their hospitality, spade work, and above all by their criticisms and suggestions contributed to both the enjoyment and the value of the work done. Special mention must be made of the help given throughout by the Government of Tanganyika Territory, without which the project could never have been carried through.

In England we are greatly indebted to many members of the Advisory Council, especially to Lord Lugard, its Chairman, and to Dr Drummond Shiels and Major Orde Browne, who served on the Executive Committee and whose great experience and ripe wisdom were always at our disposal. The latter especially gave most generously of his time and advice.

Miss R. Allcock, Secretary to Mr Merle Davis, gave invaluable service throughout. On the departure of Mr Davis for the Far East in June 1936 she remained in London, and during my second absence in Africa, from November 1936 to March 1937, she carried on all the work at the London end of the experiment with great efficiency.

Mr W. A. Bennett at Edinburgh House gave much help from the first with the financial side and also with the production of the report ; and in the final stages Miss W. G. Wilson, one of the Editors of the Edinburgh House Press, helped very materially in the revision of the manuscript and in seeing the book through the press.

Thanks are due also to Mr John Grierson and his colleagues of the Film Centre for valuable criticism and advice, and to Mr H. D. Waley of the British Film Institute, for help on many occasions. I have the General Manager's permission to say that any enquiries or other correspondence arising out of this report may be addressed to the British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

The book has been compiled under difficulties with the authors in different continents, and it has not been possible for Major Notcutt to read the final proofs. The book is intended to be a readable account of the experiment, not a formal report. It is hoped that the extended Table of Contents and the Index will enable readers to pick out the parts of interest to them without spending time over what they may consider to be irrelevant details.

I would ask all who read this report, especially those who may have some influence in implementing its recommendations, to view the project for what it was—an experiment in a new field—and to think of it in terms not of what it achieved or failed to achieve but of the possibilities which it discloses. I would ask them, if they consider that a case has been made out for the use of films in the interests of backward races, to do their best to see that

something is done about it. There may be better ways of setting about the task than those suggested in this book. If so, let us hear them. The vital thing is that action should be taken before it is too late. And let it be action commensurate with our responsibilities and with the greatness of our opportunity.

G. C. L.

FOREWORD

by

J. MERLE DAVIS

Director, Department of Social and Industrial Research

IN 1932 the Department of Social and Industrial Research of the International Missionary Council sent a commission under my leadership to Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo to study the effect of the heavy industries of the Copper Belt upon native African life. Among the findings of the commission was the undermining of the social fabric of the African tribe occasioned by the pace at which contact with western industrial life is moving. One feature of this process is the ever-widening gap between the outlooks and ways of life of the industrialized Native living in towns and on mine locations and those of his rural village. Another finding was the extreme barrenness of the recreational life of the African who has had so many of his traditional forms of entertainment taken away from him.

Bantu youth, and particularly Christian youth, through their years of training in Mission or Government schools, tend to live in a world that is quite alien and unintelligible to the elders of their villages. The need of finding some means of bridging this gap and of explaining to the older men and women the new world and new ideas which are so rapidly

advancing upon them is a major concern both of Missions and Governments.

Books are of little use to a people of whom more than 90 per cent are illiterate. The moving picture offers a possible substitute. It also seems to offer a means of supplementing the meagre provision for their recreational life.

During 1933 the Department of Social and Industrial Research attempted to organize a research project in the possibilities of the production and interchange of cultural films on an international scale. President F. P. Keppel, of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, pointed out to the director the possible value of limiting the scope of the proposed project to some East African territory and concentrating attention upon the use of the motion picture as a means of adult education. With this new educational emphasis in mind, the director of the Geneva Department, in conjunction with Major Notcutt, eventually planned the experiment which is the subject of this book, as described in Chapter I.

The experiment is an example of a new strategy that is being used in the programme of foreign missions—the examination of the whole setting in which the infant Church is growing, the critical appraisal of all the forces—economic, social and political—which condition the life of the Christian community, and the utilization of these forces, where possible, as aids in the task of building the Kingdom of God on earth.

The experiment is a missionary project, promoted by a World Missionary Council, but carried

out through the willing co-operation not only of the foreign missionary societies of several countries, but with the generous aid of an internationally known research foundation, the British Colonial Office, several East African Colonial Governments, the British Film Institute, the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, and other prominent groups having the interests of the African and of Africa in mind. Such a widely co-operative undertaking in the field of missions is unique, and this fact greatly increases the interest with which the results of the enterprise are being watched, and enlarges the scope and enhances the influence of its findings.

The chief aim of the report is to elucidate for all who have the advancement of the African at heart those principles which govern the use of the motion picture as an instrument of education and an aid for tribal society in the two-fold struggle it is making to preserve the old traditions and to adapt itself to the modern world.

The report sets forth the facts about the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment, its origin and aims, the methods adopted and the equipment used to carry out these aims, and the difficulties encountered during its brief history. It also endeavours to integrate the fund of criticisms and suggestions which the experiment has elicited both in Africa and in England, to draw some conclusions and to make recommendations for an organization to carry on and develop the work for which this experiment must be regarded as having merely begun to clear the ground.

It will be appreciated that in an enterprise of this nature, without a precedent of any kind to guide, it has been impossible to foresee and to provide for all the difficulties and complications that arose. The project was planned for two years. The work has actually continued for more than two years, but it has not been possible to make the whole period consistently productive. After a very active initial thirteen months of field work, the summer of 1936 ushered in a period of comparative inaction due to the uncertainty of securing further funds. This condition was relieved early in the autumn of that year by a second gift from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and by grants from the Colonial Development Fund and the Governments of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda, which made it possible for the experiment to remain in the field until May 1937.

The grants from the East African Governments to the experiment, however, were conditional upon its undertaking to provide a definite output of films of an educational nature which would be serviceable to the governments concerned. This arrangement altered the plans for the second stage of the enterprise, with the result that few answers to the problems outlined in the interim report for further investigation have been found. It may be fairly claimed, however, that many points of interest have been established and conclusions of importance have been reached.

The experiment has taken definite steps toward the solution of a problem that is pressing upon the attention of every government in the world that

recognizes a responsibility for providing for the education of its illiterate masses. During twelve months of constant travel and observation in India and China, the director has been impressed with the similarity of the basic human problems of Asia to those of Africa, together with their susceptibility to elucidation through the motion picture. In many centres of India and China, government and private educators and welfare workers have been eager to learn about the methods used, the character of the films made and the results attained by the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment. The frankly experimental nature of the project, with its endeavour to adapt scientific technique and educational content to peculiar racial tastes, values and patterns of life seems to possess a universal value wherever illiterate peoples are faced with the complicated task of understanding and participating in the life of the modern world.

This report, which has been prepared by Major Notcutt and Mr G. C. Latham, and edited by the latter, is designed so that readers may readily select the parts that are of interest to them, such as the technical methods and the nature and costs of the apparatus used to deal with the entirely new problems confronting an enterprise concerned with the making of films in Africa for Africans; the tours made through five African territories by the displaying unit; the reactions of the Natives to the films, and suggestions as to how films may be used in the best interests of Africa at prices within the reach of the educator and the missionary.

It is the hope of the promoters of this experi-

ment that the experience gained and the principles discovered in this African project may be of service, not only to the African, but to all peoples who have been belated in their introduction to the modern world and who are eager to share intelligently and successfully in its life.

J. M. D.

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CHAPTER I

THE BANTU EDUCATIONAL CINEMA EXPERIMENT

“WHY be in a hurry to introduce the African to the cinema?” is a question that may well be raised by the title of this book. The cinema is not an unmixed blessing. Why not leave to commercial interests the responsibility of an introduction which is sure to have far-reaching consequences of an unknown character?

The results in India of such a policy of *laissez faire* should be sufficient answer. The following quotation from a recent article by a well-known authority¹ does not overstate the position in India:

“... Any Government that is in India five years from now will be confronted with a situation that merits some serious thinking in advance. Already the films have left little respect for our (supposed) ways of living in the West. Now they are going to lead the Indian peasant into a new world; and his mind, largely untouched through millenniums, *is going to be made over from top to bottom.*”

“I have spoken as if the cinema were India’s overshadowing menace. I believe it is. But it could also be India’s salvation. The peasant, too tired to leave his hut for an evening class, will leave it for a film. Is it beyond hope that some

¹ Edward Thompson.

one who has the power and the money might use these next all-important five years to produce films that would give India and the West a better, saner idea of each other's lives ? ”

The question of a constructive film policy for Africa is a matter of equal urgency. If the provision of films is left to people whose interests are primarily economic, the African will be given in due course the type of film which the trade considers likely to be most profitable to itself. It is not the reputable producing firms which are to be mainly feared, but all kinds of small film-making companies which will arise to exploit and degrade the taste of the new market, as has happened already in India. If, on the other hand, governments would take control before it is too late and see that the cinema is used constructively for the benefit of the African, then there is no limit to the influence for good which this great force could wield. Censorship is useful and necessary, but at best it is a negative safeguard. The aim should be not merely to keep out undesirable films but to create and ensure a constant supply of good ones.

Another argument that is often heard is that it is idle to attempt to keep the Native in cotton-wool, to try to protect him from harmful films ; he must take the good with the bad and learn to discriminate as others do. The study of reports on *Social Aspects of the Cinema* or *The Cinema and Crime* would probably check the use of such arguments, but these reports are read by few. Yet surely reflection will convince any unprejudiced person

that, with backward peoples unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, it is surely our wisdom, if not our obvious duty, to prevent, so far as is possible, the dissemination of wrong ideas. Should we stand by and see a distorted presentation of the life of the white races accepted by millions of Africans when we have it in our power to show them the truth? There is much that is silly and sordid in the life of the West, but white people have other interests than money-making, gambling, crime and the pursuit of other people's wives and husbands; and their life is not entirely lived in palaces, night-clubs, opium dens, and police courts.

We can prevent the destructive use of the cinema and we can use it constructively in a hundred ways. These are the reasons for control. The reasons for urgency are that the prosperity of the Natives in certain parts of Africa is increasing rapidly; unless the field is occupied at once it may be too late.

In no country in the British Empire, so far as we are aware, has the cinema been used primarily and deliberately in the interests of the people of that country. The idea of using the cinema in large parts of Africa which it has at present barely touched was conceived by Mr J. Merle Davis, Director of the Department of Social and Industrial Research of the International Missionary Council, during his leadership of a Commission of Enquiry in 1932 into the effects of the copper mines of Central Africa upon native society and the work of Christian missions. It was not until 1934, however, when he met Major L. Notcutt, that a practical plan for

experiment with the use of the cinema among the Bantu in East and Central Africa took shape.

For some years Major Notcutt had been experimenting in a small way with films for Africans. In 1926 he was managing a group of sisal plantations in East Africa and, like many other planters, thought that an estate cinema might be an effective method to help to maintain a contented labour force. So he bought a little projector and some films. Later, for amusement, he made two or three films with African subjects and actors, and was surprised to find how remarkably attractive these proved to the Natives. It then occurred to him that there might be commercial possibilities in the establishment of native cinemas with films of their own. In 1930 he returned to England and spent some time studying film production and going into the details of a native cinema scheme. The idea of using the cinema as a means of education rather than for profit was originally inspired by reading Julian Huxley's *Africa View*. A letter to *The Times* by Frank Melland¹ encouraged Major Notcutt still further. He worked out a scheme in rough detail and discussed it with Mr Melland, who expressed himself strongly in favour of the idea, and later gave Major Notcutt a list of names of people who might help him. Amongst these was Major Hanns Vischer,² through whom Major Notcutt met Mr Davis.

In 1933 he received a letter from Mr Davis, asking for an estimate of the cost of a two-year experiment in producing educational films for

¹ Formerly Provincial Commissioner in N. Rhodesia.

² Secretary of the Education Advisory Committee, Colonial Office.

Africans. This estimate, later reinforced by a complete technical statement, became the basis of the scheme that was ultimately adopted.

Subsequently, generous grants were made by the Carnegie Corporation of New York towards a "project for experimenting in the production and exhibition of cultural, recreational and educational films for Bantu people," with the result that the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment came into being in March 1935. Financial assistance was also received from the Roan Antelope Copper Mines Ltd., Rhokana Corporation Ltd., and Mufulira Copper Mines Ltd. The experiment was originally planned to last two years, but when a professional cameraman was added to the staff, in accordance with the expressed wish of the Colonial Office, it was recognized that this extra expense would involve some curtailment of the period.

The project was conducted under the auspices of the Department of Social and Industrial Research, with the friendly assistance of the Colonial Office and the British Film Institute. The latter co-operated in the formation of an Advisory Council.¹ Lord Lugard consented to become Chairman of the Council, the members of which represented the principal British groups concerned with the welfare of the native peoples of East Africa. The experiment was under the general direction of Mr Merle Davis; Major Notcutt was appointed field director; and Mr G. C. Latham, formerly Director of Native Education in Northern Rhodesia, accepted an invitation to become educational director.

¹ For list of members, see Appendix A, p. 209.

On the advice of Major Vischer letters had been addressed some months earlier to the Directors of Education of the several East African Territories enquiring whether any property was available which would accommodate the experiment. An encouraging reply was received from Mr A. A. M. Isherwood, of Tanganyika ; he said he had discussed the matter with Africans, who welcomed it, and with the Chief Secretary,¹ who approved it. Certain suggestions were made and eventually the offer of the Tanganyika Government was accepted to lease at a nominal rental an old German sanatorium at Vugiri in the Usambara Mountains, seventy-seven miles inland from the port of Tanga. In many respects this proved an ideal site. Long-disused wards were converted into darkrooms, sound-recording studio, sound laboratory, workshop, store, office and editing-room, and provided accommodation for as many as six Europeans as well as visitors. Though only 3500 feet above sea-level, Vugiri is surprisingly cool, and the rich tropical beauty of its surroundings was a constant delight to the field-staff.

Apart from the many arrangements for actual field-work a number of minor technical problems had to be investigated and special equipment made in London before the staff's departure. This work was carried out in an old garage in Kilburn with the assistance of Mr G. C. Gardner, a young electrical engineer who had worked with Major Notcutt in East Africa. Mr Gardner was appointed as sound-engineer to the expedition,

¹ Mr Philip Mitchell, now Sir Philip Mitchell, Governor of Uganda.

Captain C. F. Coley as cinephotographer, and Mr P. D. Woodall as projectionist, to take charge of the technical side of the display tours. To save the expense of an accountant, Mrs Notcutt undertook that side of the work, which proved to be a great deal more exacting than had been anticipated. Expenditure was largely made up of numerous small items, and had it not been for her conscientious checking of small bills and other claims, the costs would have been appreciably higher.

The preparatory work in London proceeded satisfactorily with the exception of the sound-recording, which gave trouble up to the date of sailing. The sound system used was identical with that used by the British Broadcasting Corporation, though the type of equipment was different, and members of the B.B.C. staff were very helpful in giving advice. Major P. C. Bull of the Imperial College of Science and Technology and Mr Hibbert in charge of the Cinephotography Department of the Polytechnic gave valuable help in a number of other problems.

By June 1st, 1935, after three busy months of preparation, the last case of equipment had been packed and consigned to the docks, and all the field staff were on their way to East Africa.

The aim of the experiment, as set out in the first printed pamphlet issued, was to find out how best the cinema could be used for the following purposes :

1. To help the adult African to understand and to adapt himself to the new conditions which are invading and threatening to overwhelm him.

2. To reinforce the ordinary methods of the classroom and lecture hall.
3. To conserve what is best in African traditions and culture by representing these in their proper setting as stages in racial development and as an inheritance to be cherished with pride.
4. To provide recreation and entertainment.

In attempting to realize this aim we had to face many problems, some psychological, others technical and economic. Among the former were those connected with the African's state of development. How much, for instance, would he take in of a two-and-a-half hour programme of films? Would he grasp the educational idea behind the instructional film in the form of a story, and how many Africans would be sufficiently interested to put the new ideas into practice? We hoped to find out African preferences in films: which were most likely to interest, amuse and stir the emotions of different types—for instance, the educated, the partially detribalized, and the primitive villager. Among the technical and economic problems which we hoped to solve were how far the Africans themselves would wish to take part in performances, and whether their keenness to see a film display would be great enough to lead them to come from a distance and to pay an entrance fee. Then there were all the problems connected with sound. Silent films with captions would be useless where so few Africans could read; at the same time synchronized sound would be prohibitive in cost and there would be the constant language difficulty in a land of so many

different vernaculars. How could this difficulty best be overcome? In general, we had to study the economics of production in an attempt to discover a scheme which would make the use of the cinema in the best interests of the African financially possible.

These were some among the many problems, known and unknown, which were faced as the experiment entered upon its work.

The following chapters give an account of such results as were achieved. We are acutely conscious that a great deal more investigation is necessary, especially on the psychological side, by the best brains among anthropologists and others who know the African and have made a study of his mentality. But if nothing more has been done than to focus attention on some facets of the problem, the promoters feel that the experiment has justified itself.

CHAPTER II

FILMS PRODUCED—FIRST STAGE

WITH two exceptions, all the films produced have been educational in purpose, although it must be realized that the films made by the experiment differ materially from what is meant by educational films for adult western audiences. Europeans have so many means of obtaining knowledge that there is a tendency to resent the introduction of educational matter into what is regarded purely as a medium of entertainment. African natives, on the other hand, have no such general means of acquiring knowledge, so that their attitude is completely different in regard to educational films, which offer them an easy method of learning valuable lessons affecting their health, prosperity and happiness. There was no need, therefore, to fear any resentment on the part of the audience if the films shown were purely educational. The aim of the experiment, as already stated, was to find out how to make educational films that would be at the same time comprehensible, attractive and convincing to Natives.

As will be seen from the following descriptions the films made were mainly of the instructional type, as it was easier with these to find out the extent to which the audience had understood the lesson which the film was trying to teach. The

films made for the governments in the last stage of the experiment were restricted, by the terms of the contract, to instructional films on agricultural and veterinary subjects. During the course of the experiment, 18,200 feet of negative film and 48,400 feet of positive film were used. Thirty-five films and parts of a few others were made.

Everything was ready for production towards the end of July 1935. As Latham was to leave on an exhibition tour at the beginning of September, the production of an experimental programme of films had to be rushed through. The purpose of this first tour was to gain knowledge with which to make more serious subsequent experiments. The following seven films were produced in the forty days available.

No. 1. *Post Office Savings Bank* : Two reels.

On arrival at Vugiri a number of suggestions for scenarios were in hand. Two of them were on this subject, which appealed to us because of its dramatic possibilities. The subject was an excellent one on which to try out the ability of actors, to test the reactions of native audiences to the well-understood principles of comedies for western audiences, and to gain experience in production.

The story concerns two Natives who go to their homes after receiving their pay for working on a plantation. One buries his money in the floor of his hut, and is seen doing so by a thief who watches through a crack in the wall. In the evening the

Native and his wife go to a dance and the thief, noting their arrival there, goes to the hut and steals the money. The next morning the Native has a look to see if his money is there (this simple "suspense" action proved most effective with native audiences) and, discovering his loss, calls his neighbours to tell them about it. One tells him of a stranger seen in the village, and another that this stranger was seen early in the morning on his way to a nearby township. The Native sets off to the township with one of his neighbours who says he can identify the stranger. On arrival at the town they meet the second Native who had been working on the plantation, and tell him of the theft. He shows them how he guards his money, and takes them to the Post Office where the workings of the Savings Bank are explained to them briefly. On returning through the town they see the thief outside an Indian shop buying a shirt; as soon as he sees them he runs, thus giving himself away. Then follows a chase in which the thief twice eludes his pursuers. Eventually, exhausted, he climbs a tree. (At this point we tried an experiment which, although it failed, is worth noting. The people chasing the thief turned to the audience and said, "Where has the thief gone?" The idea was to see whether the audience would identify themselves sufficiently with the story to give the appropriate answer. The experiment, as mentioned, failed except on two or three occasions, but this may have been because the scene was not well filmed, and because the speech was not sufficiently synchronous to be convincing to the audience.) One

of the pursuers then climbs the tree to catch the thief, who goes higher and higher, standing at last on a branch which breaks. The thief falls and is taken off by a native policeman. The stolen money is recovered and is, of course, put in the Post Office Savings Bank.

In the first version of this film the thief was killed by his fall. It was found by questioning the audience on the first tour that the majority thought this rather drastic punishment. They thought it would be better if the thief were arrested and taken to the Chief for punishment. Also, we found that many Natives, not noticing the breaking of the branch, thought that the pursuer, who climbed the tree after the thief, had pushed him down and killed him. Accordingly, the final shots were re-taken in the form described above.

This film, which was shown more than seventy times altogether, was always one of the most popular. This was due, no doubt, to the exciting chase of the thief. The scenes of the thief stealing the money and of the owner discovering the loss of it also caused great amusement. The propaganda was well appreciated and commented on favourably by many Africans.

There was, however, as we have said, a great deal of misunderstanding of the story, especially in its first form. It seemed to be the general opinion that the thief was in some way killed by the pursuer, either with the knife which was actually brandished by the thief just before he fell from the tree, or by the cutting of the branch on which he stood. Some Africans thought that this was fair

and served the thief right, but the majority seemed to be rather shocked. One wrote: "A thief does not meet his fate in such a way now. He should be tried before a Native or European Court and given hard labour." Another remarked that the man who killed the thief should be brought to justice to show that he may not take the law into his own hands. It appears from this that in making films for Africans care must be taken that wrong-doing is always punished. If anything wrong is shown as happening in a film without disapproval being clearly expressed, the Native is apt to think that we approve of it.

Some Europeans objected to the showing of theft at all, also to the drawing of the knife by the thief. They hold that no crime or violence of any kind should be shown. Some thought that the moral of the story was rather spoilt by the fact that the foolish man who had buried his money recovered it in the end.

No. 2. *Tanga Travel*: Two reels.

To test whether native travel films were of interest, a short film was produced, showing scenes from Tanga to Korogwe. We avoided introducing many pictures of scenery. The shots included the harbour, an old wreck, an Arab dhow, fish-market, beer-shop, tea-shop, church, prison, railway, work at a missionary training centre, and finished with part of an initiation ceremony dance.

An interesting point about this film was that attempts at the introduction of a little mild humour completely failed. At one point some smiling faces

appeared unexpectedly over the side of a boat, and later what appeared to be a full-sized native hut was shown, but when a boy stood alongside it was seen to be only a model. These two shots never once produced a laugh. On the other hand, a short shot of an old woman tending a rice-field always produced a roar of laughter. This film, though popular near the coast, did not arouse much interest elsewhere, though certain shots, especially the dance at the end, were always liked.

No. 3. *Tax*: Two reels.

The idea behind this film was sound, and an excellent film could be made of the same subject based on the experience gained with this one. Many Natives are under the impression that their tax goes into the pockets of local administrative officers. The object of the film was to give them an idea of how it is used. In the first reel scenes were shown of the old days, with tribute being paid to the Chief, and a raid on a village which refused to pay. In the second reel examples were given of various services rendered to Natives in return for the taxes paid—for instance, medical attention, education, help in time of famine, maintenance of order and peace. The film was not a success, as it needed more time than could be allowed for it; and on the day allocated for taking most of the scenes for the first reel, the local chief failed to keep his promise to produce large numbers of warriors and other requirements. The film was popular in Tanga, but came in for a certain amount of criticism, and was not often shown.

No. 4. *Hides*: One reel.

This was a straight instructional film taken at Korogwe with the help of the Veterinary Officer there. The purpose was to show the approved method of cleaning hides and drying them on frames in the shade in contrast to the ordinary native method of pegging them down in the sun. The superiority of the shade-dried products was demonstrated, also their increased cash value. This film was appreciated among cattle-owning tribes where they had already heard something about the subject, but naturally aroused little interest elsewhere.

No. 5. *Tea*: One reel.

In view of the rapid growth of tea-drinking amongst Natives this short film was made. The latter part was taken at a plantation five miles from the headquarters of the experiment, and showed scenes of women picking the tea leaves and having their baskets weighed, the factory, packing, and tasting.

No. 6. *The Chief*: Two reels.

This was an attempt at a cultural film, to portray the conflict between the old and the new. The action of the story is supposed to have taken place some years ago. A chief who has been visiting a distant relative has seen a mission school and been impressed with the value of education. He returns to his people, summons a council of elders, and puts before them his project to start a

school in their locality, telling them that the mission will supply a teacher if they will pay him and build the school. The elders go away to consider the matter. One of them consults the local witch-doctor, who immediately sees that a school would have the effect of undermining his power, so he strongly opposes it. The chief, however, wins the day and the school is established. Later, the chief falls ill, and on the advice of the school teacher is carried to a hospital where he is given an injection and faints. The elder who accompanies him thinks he is dead, and returns to tell the people the news. The witch-doctor thereupon calls a meeting, and induces the people to believe that the chief died because the school teacher had bewitched him in order to secure power for himself. The school teacher is compelled to submit to ordeal by poison. Just as he is about to drink the poison the chief arrives, cured. He asks for an explanation, and then enquires if the witch-doctor is sure that, since he was innocent, the school teacher would not have died if he had drunk the poison. The witch-doctor replies that the teacher would not have died. The chief thereupon hands him the pot and says, "Well, drink it yourself!" The witch-doctor hesitates a moment and then, throwing the pot down, runs away.

We attempted to film this story on two reels (sixteen minutes of screen time) and it was apparent that it could not be satisfactorily condensed to that extent. Also, the rushed production caused a tendency to hurry the action too much in certain parts, which were thus not clear; furthermore,

owing to lack of experience at that time of producing films for the Bantu, the scenes were not nearly as well directed as they could have been later. For these reasons the film was not a good one, but it was popular, and we learned a good deal from it.

The audience, having got it into their heads (like the elder) that the chief had died in hospital, did not recognize him on his return, though his face should have been familiar to them by then, and he was wearing the same clothes. They usually thought that the man who appeared later was another chief. To counteract this bad propaganda for the European hospital, a brief explanation of the story was given through the microphone, emphasizing that the chief only fainted in the hospital and appeared later completely cured.

The rapid climax, where in the course of fifteen seconds the tables were turned on the witch-doctor, was a great success, and the end of the film was generally greeted with a universal shout. The witch-doctor and his antics were somewhat burlesqued, but many Natives told us that it was quite fairly true to life.

Another interesting point about this film was that it was to a great extent made or marred by its commentary. In Swahili and in Bemba the commentary was done by the actor Khalil bin Ali, who took the part of the witch-doctor, and in these languages it was almost invariably a great success. In Nyanja and other languages in which the commentary was done by others and had no life in it, the film met with a poor reception.

No. 7. *First Farce* : One reel.

This was an experiment to test if films of the slap-stick comedy type could be easily turned out and whether they would be popular with African audiences. The scenario was prepared mechanically, *i.e.* we merely selected a few of the standard film jokes and strung a story round them. On the whole, though the film was marred by some rather poor photography, it may be said that this was a successful experiment—audiences always laughed heartily throughout, and most of the jokes went down well in spite of their lack of spontaneity in production. It is possible that a proportion of such films will be useful to help to attract audiences to the cinema in the largest possible numbers. It is obvious that they are easy to produce.

This particular farce, which showed the pranks played by a naughty boy, was often criticized by senior Africans on account of the disrespect shown by the boy to his elders. They did not think it right to show such behaviour on the screen, even though the boy had a beating at the end.

After the displaying unit had left for its first tour, there was not the same urgency to produce films rapidly. We decided to attempt one instructional film, one interest film, a long film of the "feature" type, and another quickly produced farce.

No. 8. *Co-operatives* : One reel.

This was an eight-minute interest film to show a successful native co-operative movement amongst

the Wachagga near Moshi in Tanganyika. But it was too ambitious for so short a film. We showed how the Wachagga had tried to copy the Europeans in their locality who were growing coffee and how at first they failed through lack of knowledge of coffee cultivation and disease control. This was presented humorously by showing Europeans drinking the native coffee and finding it unpleasant. Then followed scenes showing the developed co-operative movement and some idea of its activities and value.

On the whole this was a successful film but weak in places, and we were glad of the opportunity to make another on the same subject later.

No. 9. *Soil Erosion*: Two reels.

This film, taken with the help of the Agricultural and Forest Officers at Moshi, was intended to demonstrate the causes of soil erosion and methods of combating it. Some of the lessons learned from it are mentioned in Chapter VII.

It was a surprising film in many ways. The photography was not good and it was difficult in some places to follow the lesson it was supposed to teach. Even Agricultural Officers differed as to what certain scenes were intended to portray. For this reason it was omitted from the programme of several shows in Tanganyika. But it was tried again in Kenya and was an immediate success, being chosen as the most popular film at several displays and almost invariably being among the first three. The reason why Europeans could not follow the film was, no doubt, because the pictures

themselves were not sufficiently clear to be self-explanatory, and the commentary was not properly understood. The Natives in Tanganyika may have understood the commentary but were not familiar with the subject. In Kenya, especially in the Kikuyu reserve, where there has been a considerable amount of propaganda regarding soil erosion and the Natives are definitely progressive, the pictures and the commentary were well understood, were seen to contain valuable teaching, and were appreciated accordingly. As explained elsewhere, the technical quality of the picture is of very secondary importance so far as rural Natives are concerned.

No. 10. *Gumu* : Seven reels.

This was the only attempt made by the experiment to produce a feature¹ film. It was intended to relate this film with No. 9 on soil, the idea being that the two would form practically a complete programme and would be interlinked—No. 9 being instructional and No. 10 an entertainment film repeating what had been taught in No. 9.

It may be of interest to relate how the plot of this film was developed. Obviously it must conclude with the hero becoming prosperous through the application of better agriculture as taught in film No. 9—but how could this be brought about in a natural way? How should the hero acquire the knowledge of better methods? At this time it happened that Mrs Notcutt had been using compost

¹ A feature film is the leading attraction in a cinema programme, and is as a rule more expensively and elaborately produced than other classes of films.

pits with considerable success to make a substitute for manure on the Vugiri garden. This suggested a means, as the hero could work for the European and observe the results obtained by this method. The obvious opening to the film would be to have the hero living under conditions where the land was poor and farming hard work. To get him to the European's garden meant that he must leave his home to seek work. But why should he leave? A possible reason would be that he was inspired by the prosperity of another Native who had been working and had made money. But a Native does not do much farming himself; most of the work falls on the women. Very well, the film could open with the hero mourning the death of his wife and then having to work his fields himself.

So far this was a good instructional plot but had nothing very entertaining about it. Mr E. C. Baker, who was then District Officer at Tanga, suggested a film to show the evils of rural Natives going to towns and marrying town girls. This generally resulted in the girl's parents refusing to allow her to return home with the Native, who thus, to his misfortune, would become urbanized; and moreover the sophisticated town girl, despising the peasant, would often prove an unfaithful, unsatisfactory wife. This provided a good sub-plot for the middle of the film; but if the hero was only to be a garden boy he would not have the money to acquire a town wife. Some means must be found to make him get rich quickly without interfering with the plot. The easiest way would be to cause him to earn a substantial reward for some special service to his

European master, and this would also be a good way to bring some excitement into the film. At first it was suggested that the hero should kill a lion which was threatening the life of the European's child, but although it would have been easy to fake, there might have been a good deal of trouble in getting the lion shots. So the hero was turned into a successful detective, who recovered money stolen from his master by a thief.

Thus we had reached the rough outline of the film: the widower finding his farm hard and profitless work; the accidental meeting with a Native returning from work for white men with all the signs of prosperity as the result, inspiring the hero to seek work; his promotion from a common labourer to a garden boy; his learning of the principles of soil enrichment; his smart piece of detective work, leading to a handsome reward; his sojourn in a town where he spends his money and acquires a town wife; his resultant poverty and decision to go home; his wife's parents' refusal to let the girl go with him; his subsequent return home, where he puts into practice the better agricultural methods resulting in the achievement of genuine prosperity.

The missing element in the film, so far, was comedy, but a clever native comedian was engaged, and by putting him in as the hero's friend, we saw plenty of chances for humour as the story developed.

With this rough outline filming was begun. We told the story to the cast and asked for their suggestions. They were unanimous in wanting to begin with a funeral to account for the widower!

They dug a grave, faked a corpse, and gave a most interesting scene of a funeral ; but this sequence was subsequently cut out because it appeared unnecessarily morbid. The comedian was a great success and, as we learned his comedy methods, we were able to devise suitable scenes to give full scope for his humour.

In the meantime we were puzzling over some of the sub-plots. For instance, in the detective scenes it would be undesirable from every point of view to show anything original or clever in the way of theft, but something was needed which would give opportunity for a simple piece of detective work. This problem was solved by making the office clerk the thief. His master, the plantation owner, brought money for wages and put it in a crude safe, went out and dropped the keys. The clerk picked them up and, late at night, entered the office and stole the money ; as he made his exit through the window his shirt caught on a nail, and the next morning the hero found a fragment of it and recognized to whom it belonged. Then followed a chase (sure method of creating excitement), and a fight on top of a high rock—the hero, after being nearly beaten, throwing the thief over the top. From experience with the *Post Office Savings Bank* film it appeared that with most of the audience the death even of the villain is not popular. So, in spite of the thief's fall over a hundred-foot cliff, he remained alive, and was left installed in the plantation hospital. The hero received his reward and departed for the town with his friend. This gave an excellent chance for some humour in having them travel by

train—a new experience for the hero's friend. The comedian gave a realistic performance of the fear of a Native on first mounting a train, and audiences revelled in it.

The next serious difficulty was how to enable the hero to return to his home after his trouble in the town, because if he were shown as paying a substantial bride-price for his town wife he would not leave the town without the wife or the return of the bride-price. We got over this difficulty by drawing on Mr Baker's knowledge and making the girl a Mohammedan whom the hero unintentionally divorced owing to his ignorance of custom. The part of the girl was played by a professional native actress from Zanzibar, and she did it very well. The unintentional divorce scene occurred—as it had to—over an affair of the wife's lover. It was only necessary to show the barest of hints that the other man was attempting to become her lover, the point being fully grasped by every audience. This was a useful experience, as it shows that when sex must be touched on in entertainment films there is no necessity whatever for anything in the least undesirable to be filmed.

The last part of the film was purely instructional, following on the instructional film on soil. The hero was shown preparing and using compost, and adopting anti-soil-erosion measures. The final scene showed him as a prosperous Native with a large hut and a family; but by European standards this seemed a tame end. By way of a climax the comedian was brought into the scene again, asking the hero to visit his farm. On the way he explains

that, although he has used compost exactly in the way the hero has shown him, his crops won't grow. The hero examines the soil and then remarks, "What has happened to the seed? There doesn't seem to be any in the soil." To which the comedian, who throughout the film has been presented as a lovable fool, replies, "Drat! I forgot to plant any!" It is interesting to note that whereas Europeans familiar with the language of the commentary always laughed at this, native audiences did not seem to be amused. For them it would probably have been better to cut out this climax and to end on the scene of the hero outside his prosperous-looking house with his nicely dressed wife and child.

This film introduced a number of new points. First, objections were raised to it by the Indian community because it contained a scene in which an Indian trader charged a higher price for the same article to the yokels visiting the town than to a town Native; they thought that this implied dishonest trading. This scene was therefore cut. Secondly, it was objected to by some Europeans because when the two Natives were seeking work they were shown interviewing a European who treated his labourers badly. This was introduced with the idea of making a comparison with the more friendly European with whom the Natives eventually secured work. Thirdly, the native commentator who spoke the part of the European did so in a clever imitation of a European who, though able to make himself understood, did not possess much knowledge of the vernacular. This was

objected to by some Europeans, who considered that the planter should have been shown in the best light. Fourthly, many objected to the scenes in the town, some of which seemed to them somewhat undesirable and not very intelligible. This may have been due to a lack of knowledge of the problems of urbanization. The point about the divorce was not generally grasped except by Natives familiar with Mohammedan law. One official, whose work brought him very closely in touch with the problems of Natives in Nairobi, stated that the town scenes dealt faithfully with a serious problem of that town.

It would seem that the long "feature" film is not as yet likely to be important. Naturally, it takes much more time and in other ways is more expensive than other types.

No. 11. *The Hare and the Leopard* : One reel.

During a preliminary tour made by Latham he offered a prize at Makerere College for the best story written by an African student which could be adapted for a film. Although none of the stories submitted were entirely suitable there was one story which was recognized as one of the well-known fables of the African hare, but written about human beings. Many people had already suggested filming such fables, but previously it had seemed impracticable to do so. If, however, the animal parts could be converted into humans made up to have some resemblance to the animals they were representing, it might open up a wide field. We took bits out of several fables and combined

them into a little farce. The parts were allocated and the Natives left to arrange their own make-up ; and very amusingly they did it. The hare had a tail that wagged ; the leopard some most realistic whiskers and a suitably spotted shirt ; the monkeys had long tails, the rat a still longer tail. It was perhaps rather a pity that we set ourselves the task of completing the film in one production day, in order to test whether such films could be produced at this speed. The action, being hurriedly done, tended to be scamped, and it is therefore difficult to say whether the comparative non-success of the film was due to this reason or, as explained by a Native critic, because the animals were merely human beings.

In November 1935 the Kenya Medical Department lent the services of Dr C. R. Philip for some months in order to assist in the production of films on a number of subjects. Dr Philip had not only made an extensive study of native health but was thoroughly familiar with the economic life of the African and possessed a practical knowledge of agriculture. He took a prominent part in the production of the two following films.

No. 12. *Food and Health* : Four reels.

Dr Philip considered this to be one of the most important subjects in connection with native health, but it was not easy to find a way to present it. Finally we adopted the principle of an illustrated lecture. The lecture was similar to the one which Dr Philip himself used when talking to large

numbers of Natives on this subject, but with the advantage that points could be illustrated on the screen which were difficult to explain verbally. The film opened with a Headman summoning his people to listen to a lecture from a native health worker, who then gave his talk. Many Natives in the crowd asked questions, and in the replies various things were shown on the screen to make them clearer.

This film failed for two reasons. First, because we were unsuccessful in an attempt to post-synchronize the words of the speaker, with the result that the talk was dull and unconvincing. Had the film been a true talkie, with a Native better fitted to do the talking, it might have fulfilled its purpose well. The second reason was that it was rather too long.

Dr D. B. Wilson, who later helped with the other productions, was strongly in agreement with Dr Philip as to the importance of educational films on diet, but so far no satisfactory way to deal directly with the subject has been evolved. It appears to be one more suitable for indirect treatment in the manner of the hookworm film described later.

No. 13. *More Milk* : One reel.

Dr Philip produced and photographed this film himself at the Ngong Veterinary Centre, Kenya, on the method evolved there to produce more milk from native cows by hand-rearing calves. Subsequently it was found to have been too much condensed to be fully comprehensible, but the

knowledge and experience gained were of great value in the production of a second film on the same subject later. The film is of particular interest as showing what can be done by a man with a little knowledge of the rules of simple film production.

CHAPTER III

FILMS PRODUCED—SECOND STAGE

THE films described in the last chapter were those shown on the tours of the displaying unit up to February 1936. This chapter deals with those taken subsequently. These have not been exhibited extensively, so that there is nothing like the same volume of opinion and criticism in regard to them. This is unfortunate, as their quality is in most cases much superior to that of the earlier films.

No. 14. *Healthy Babies*: Two reels.

This film was produced at Kiambu hospital in Kenya. The object was to teach the proper care of infants, and to provide propaganda to encourage native women to visit ante-natal clinics where they exist. The film is not really suitable for many parts of East Africa because it is too advanced. The first sequence deals with the ante-natal clinic where a woman is being advised to attend hospital for her confinement. The second sequence shows the routine care of infants at the hospital and the way in which the mother is taught to look after her baby's welfare. The third shows the child welfare clinic and was intended to bring out the main errors made by native mothers, *i.e.* feeding the infant

whenever it cries ; feeding it on food other than milk, and lack of cleanliness. The value of this teaching is impaired by the fact that the second sequence shows conditions which are not possible in the average native home.

The film provided a number of useful lessons in production, and in particular it showed that good native actresses can be had from institutions where native women employed under European supervision lose some of their self-consciousness. A young native nurse at the hospital was excellent as the mother in this film.

No. 15. *Progress* : Three reels.

Dr Philip was anxious to have a film on better housing. Nowhere, perhaps, can the success of housing propaganda be seen to better advantage than in the Kiambu native reserve of Kenya, so this was chosen as the location for the film. We were greatly struck with one homestead where we could see the three stages of development from a poor hut to a bigger hut and finally to a stone house with corrugated-iron roof. The owner proved to be a good actor and his story was told in the film with slight adornments. But, as in *Healthy Babies*, the film went too far in that the final house was much too advanced in construction to be a practical proposition for any but Natives living under conditions where relative wealth is not too difficult to acquire. Also we tended to bring in too many points, and most Europeans (not perhaps fully familiar with the progress of the Kiambu reserve) considered it too idealistic. Native attitude may have been the same.

Simpler films on this subject would probably be far more effective.

No. 16. *Soil Erosion at Machakos*: Three reels.

Dr Philip strongly supported his Department's view that no real progress could be made with the health of the Natives when their very existence was being threatened by the loss of their soil through erosion. Much useful experience had been gained from the previous attempt to film this subject, and with Dr Philip's help a film was made of which the subject-matter received high commendation from several quarters, although unfortunately the photography of much of it was poor. This was due to a lens becoming damaged during filming, the fault not being discovered until the prints were made.

The film began by showing an Agricultural Officer talking to some Natives on the subject of soil erosion and then taking them to see a demonstration. We believe that a thoroughly lucid explanation of this difficult subject was given by a simple faking process. The latter part of the film showed what was being done to recondition the badly eroded areas at Machakos and truthfully represented this.

More than any other of the films this illustrates the possibilities of education through the medium of the film. It shows also how effectively a subject of general interest, such as re-conditioning land, can be treated by demonstrating what a particular tribe is actually doing.

It may be that this film tried to cover the subject

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rather too fully, and that it would have been better to deal exclusively with soil erosion due to overstocking, omitting the problem of erosion due to cultivation.

After the making of Film No. 16 a period of non-production followed, due to uncertainty with regard to funds. When further funds were obtained plans were made to ascertain the number of reels which could be produced in a given time if adequate preparation were made in advance, and the approximate cost per reel. While some preliminary correspondence was being conducted in regard to this programme, a short film was produced locally.

No. 17. *Anæsthesia* : One reel.

This subject had been suggested by several people and one excellent scenario had been submitted. In many parts of Africa Natives are terrified of surgical operations, and the idea was to show that they need not be feared. For this film our leading actor, Shabani, was used. He was shown with a large growth near his knee (faked by means of black plasticine). After attending a tribal dispensary he was eventually induced to go to hospital, where he was operated on. His fear during all this part was excellently acted, with just enough touches of humour. He was shown being given an anæsthetic and then completely unconscious when the first incision was made. No details of the operation were shown, of course, except the preparation. The hospital shown was a mission

hospital of the simple but efficient kind ; it would probably have been a mistake to show one of the modern well-built hospitals.

Shabani was then seen being carried unconscious from the operating-table to the ward, and later shown coming round—at first terrified in the belief that the operation was still taking place, and then delighted to discover that it was all over and the growth removed. The film finished with his return to his village and the execution of a joy-dance for the amusement of the children.

No. 18. *Peasant Holdings* : Two reels.

This film showed a most interesting experiment being undertaken at Kingolwira, near Morogoro, Tanganyika Territory. A large area of land, tsetse-infested, was allocated for small holdings, and Natives were offered fourteen-acre plots therein together with some assistance in the way of free food until the first crops were ready, and free building materials (sisal poles). When a sufficiently large area had been cleared, resulting in the elimination of tsetse, cattle were introduced. The small-holders had to plant crops recommended by the Agricultural Officer and adopt approved methods, including crop rotation.

In the film a Native was seen making enquiries about the holdings. He applied to the office and was told to have a look round, and the film followed him doing so. We filmed the three different stages of development of the holdings and endeavoured to bring out the main points in the scheme. This

film has not yet been shown a sufficient number of times to judge of its merits.

No. 19. *Preserving Eggs* : Two reels.

We asked the acting Director of the Veterinary Department to suggest a subject for an instructional film which would be of value and of fairly general application. He made a number of suggestions, the one that particularly appealed being an experiment which had been made in egg-preserving. The idea was that in countries where there is no profitable cash crop Natives are at a great disadvantage, as they may have to carry low-price produce a considerable distance to sell it. Eggs are light and in many towns comparatively expensive ; so that if an egg-preservative could be found which Natives could make themselves there was a possibility of revenue from this source. After many experiments it was found that a mixture of native beeswax and crude simsim oil acted as an excellent preservative ; eggs, if really fresh when treated, would last for six months.

Shabani was used for this film, acting as a typical Native of the poorest districts. He brought a few eggs for sale, but the cook on testing them found them all bad. The story then broke off while it was explained by illustration that Europeans eat many eggs (most Natives do not eat them at all) ; they were shown being boiled, fried, used for cakes, and eaten in large numbers. A Native veterinary instructor was then seen teaching Shabani the secret of preserving. The process was shown in what would be sufficient detail for a Native to

comprehend, and the film finished with Shabani selling a large crate of eggs, duly tested by the purchaser, for a handsome sum.

Shabani's amusing acting and the simplicity of the subject should make this a useful example of this type of film. It is not likely that Natives would carry out the procedure suggested after seeing the film once, but with a little encouragement and perhaps an example set by one or two progressive Natives, it might be taken up very quickly.

No. 20. *Native Veterinary Assistants* : Five reels.

Except for a hurried film on the subject of preparation of hides (No. 4), we had not attempted any veterinary subjects and had no knowledge as to which of the many possible subjects were likely to interest. At Mpwapwa, the veterinary headquarters for Tanganyika, a number of Natives were undergoing a general training to fit them as assistants to veterinary officers. We decided that to film this training would enable us to cover a wide range of subjects, and by study of audience-reactions we should be able to find out for future guidance those which were of particular interest. The film began with the pupils receiving a homily from the Director, the object being to help the audience to realize that what they would see would be mainly things of the future. It then proceeded to show diagnosis of typical cattle disease and cure, and many important points in animal husbandry, such as native creameries, improvement of grazing, hay, silage, improvement of stock by breeding, use of donkeys, and the correct branding of cattle.

To enliven the film it finished with shots of the students playing football.

We made an experiment in this film which appears to have been successful. There are many cases in which to explain disease it is necessary to show a microscopic view of its cause. As no ordinary Native has any idea of what a microscope is, and can do, it is useless to show a highly magnified view of some object on the screen. The Native generally has no conception of optical magnification, and, even if he has, he has no conception of the scale of magnification. We endeavoured to overcome this difficulty by showing one of the pupils being instructed in the use of the microscope. The instructor pulled out one of the pupil's hairs and on the screen was shown an enormous object supposed to be the tip of hair. Then a blood slide was seen being made from a diseased animal; the microscope scene was repeated and then a live trypanosome shown on the screen. This was faked by means of a plasticine model; satisfactorily so, as it deceived an expert. Our own native assistants, when we tested out the film on them, said they were clear that what they had seen was an insect in the blood too small to see with their eyes. It would thus seem that this method was successful. This film and all those mentioned subsequently have not yet been shown often enough to obtain any useful information as to results.

Earlier in the year, whilst at Dar-es-Salaam, Dr Scott, the Director of Medical Services, had suggested a film on malaria, and he kindly lent us

the services of Dr D. B. Wilson, Malaria Research Officer, for the purpose of helping with it. Dr Wilson had worked some years closely in contact with native life and therefore had, like Dr Philip, an exceptionally good knowledge of native outlook. His views were in close agreement with those of Dr Philip.

No. 21. *Infant Malaria* : Two reels.

Before Dr Wilson joined us we had already outlined a scenario from the many sent us. He explained that the subject was not so simple as we had imagined. Under African conditions, the attempt to eliminate mosquitoes by stopping their breeding-places in districts where there is much malaria is such a big task as to be impracticable for native villages. The remedy seems to be to encourage local immunity to malaria. In such districts the disease has little effect on adult Natives because of the comparative immunity which they attain, but it is a very serious cause of mortality amongst infants. A few weeks after an infant is born it has an attack of malaria, and if it does not die after the first few of these attacks it will become more and more immune provided it continues to be infected. But the immunity so gained is purely local. If the Native visits another malarial district he will quickly be attacked, and the attacks will continue until he acquires a new immunity to the local variety. The problem therefore is twofold—that of saving infant life, and of helping adult Natives to realize that although they do not suffer from malaria in their own locality they may do so when

they go to another district. It is thought that infant life could be saved, without seriously interfering with the desired process of attaining immunity, by giving the infant an under-dose of quinine when attacked, sufficient only to save life.

The subject was a difficult one to film, and it was finally decided to show it in simple story form. A Native decides to visit his brother, who happens to be a dispenser working in another district. He takes leave of his wife, who has recently given birth to a healthy child. On the way to his brother's village he is shown as passing through heavy rain to indicate that it is the rainy season. On arrival at his brother's place he complains of the many mosquitoes in the district and shows one which has settled on his finger. (This gave the opportunity for a big close-up of a mosquito, the scale of which could be judged and the insect therefore recognized by its size in comparison with his finger-nail.) Ten days later he becomes ill and his brother tells him he has malaria. Synchronized talkie was badly needed at this point to explain by question and answer the facts about malaria. The difficulty about lip synchronization is that though it may be fairly good in the original language it is almost impossible to make it successful with subsequent languages in which the commentary is recorded. To avoid the picture of a person speaking with lips moving not in accord with the speech, the listener was generally shown on the screen, the speaker being visible only for the first word or two of his sentence.

The patient is given quinine and a few days later is shown cured. His brother takes him to the

dispensary to tell him more about malaria in children. He shows him a number of children suffering from different fevers, and tells him that if a child has high fever, but no cough or diarrhoea, it is almost certain that the sickness is malaria. The Native asks for some quinine and is told that this cannot be issued, but that Government quinine can be obtained at dispensaries in case of sickness, or that he can buy quinine at any post office very cheaply ; in fact, for two pennies he can probably save his baby's life—a slogan which was used in the commentary. The Native buys the quinine and is shown the correct dosage—one quarter of a tablet each day for four successive days. He returns home to find his baby sick and identifies the illness as malaria. He gives the child the quinine (shown in fullest detail) and the child recovers. The film ends with a recapitulation introduced by showing the village women coming to the Native to learn about malaria.

No. 22. *Hookworm* : Two reels.

Dr Wilson selected this as a second suitable subject for filming. Through seeing the *Preserving Eggs* film, he had been impressed by the effectiveness of the film as a medium of instruction, and the chief point of this hookworm film was to be instruction in a simple method of making sandals. The first part of the film dealt with the cause of hookworm. It showed an oldish man, a typical hookworm case, on his way to the dispensary to obtain medicine. He described his symptoms to a friend in order that the audience might clearly recognize

the disease. The commentator explained that inside the man's bowels there would be hookworms, which were screened, and they were causing his illness. On the way to the dispensary he was shown going to stool; we managed to avoid being unnecessarily unpleasant by making the place recognizable by means of a broken pot. This scene of the place with the broken pot was repeated later and would thus be connected with the act. The earth was examined under a magnifying glass some little time later, and the tiny embryo hookworms in the soil were clearly seen. Two Natives were then shown meeting on the path, one of them standing almost on the exact spot where the Native had excreted, and it was explained that this was how infection occurred. Later the first Native was shown re-infecting himself.

The second part of the film dealt with remedies. The construction of a simple earth latrine was shown, and it was explained that by this means an infected man could avoid infecting others. Secondly, green vegetables were shown to be an excellent remedy, thus introducing the subject of diet. Further, it was suggested that one vegetable was obtainable all the year round, namely cassava leaves, and the quantity necessary and the manner of cooking was indicated. Lastly, the wearing of sandals was shown as the simplest way to avoid infection; with the feet covered the hookworm would find it very difficult to gain access to the body. The film illustrated how to make comfortable sandals from discarded motor tyres and from hide.

After the making of this group of films there was another period of non-production due to financial uncertainties, which entailed the loss of two good months for photography. The last group of films was made to the order of the Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika Governments.¹ Their decision to have these films made was taken at short notice, and little thought had been given to the subjects. These were to be entirely concerned with agriculture and animal husbandry. We realized from experience that there would be two difficulties: first, that as the Departmental Directors and their staffs had had as yet little opportunity to know the possibilities of educational films they would find difficulty in the selection of suitable subjects; and secondly, that as the time to make the films was strictly limited by the money available, as little time as possible must be spent in travelling. Latham, arriving from England at the end of December 1936, left on a brief tour of the capitals in order to discuss the different suitable subjects, as it was felt that this was the only way to obtain rapid decisions. We were commissioned by the governments to make 4500 feet of film and had estimated the cost from the previous group of films. Actually it was found that with increasing experience we could work more quickly and could therefore produce more films with a comparatively small increase in cost. The main items of expenditure were salaries and travelling. The time taken over the filming tour could not be appreciably reduced and it seemed wasteful not to do all the filming possible while

¹ See p. 128.

there was the opportunity. The cost of the extra film was small in comparison with the other two items.

For this group of films the experiment secured the services of Mr Koritschoner, an anthropologist, whose task was to be the supervision of the commentaries and help in film production.

No. 23. *Improved Agriculture*: Five reels.

The scenario of a film was worked out which it was considered might be acceptable to all the governments concerned. It was on the basic principles of improved agriculture, *i.e.* seed selection, crop rotation and use of manure. We wanted to make the film interesting and therefore presented it in the form of a competition. Four Natives of different tribes are seen applying to an Agricultural Officer for land on which to settle, as they had not the means or the desire to return home. (This sometimes happens where European plantations exist and Natives travel far to seek work.) He questions them about the conditions in their own districts and makes them realize that in time there will tend to be a shortage of land in some districts, and that peasants will have to learn the way to crop continuously the same piece of land. He says he will test their ability to meet these circumstances and allocates them each an adjacent plot of land, at the same time offering to pay their annual hut tax and award a money prize to the winner of the competition, which is to last five years.

The five years having passed, the Agricultural Officer inspects the results, and the crop from each

plot is harvested and measured. Each Native then describes retrospectively the methods he adopted. The first employed the customary native methods of agriculture, including measures to protect his fields and crop from being bewitched. (It was particularly interesting to note that the anti-witchcraft ceremonies as arranged by Koritschoner were stated to be in common with those of the tribes of a number of Natives who witnessed the making of the film, as far apart as Kenya and Northern Portuguese East Africa.) His crop is two bags of cobs, but he explains that in previous years it has been more. The second Native has a crop of four bags, and demonstrates how he has done this by means of seed selection; he also says that his crop is less than before. The third Native has five bags; he has practised a simple crop rotation of maize and beans. The fourth Native has ten bags, having gone to a neighbouring cattle boma and obtained the owner's consent to remove earth therefrom. His crop has steadily increased, and the prize is awarded to him.

The first Native is much impressed, but objects that the competition was not fair because in his country he cannot obtain cattle manure. The Agricultural Officer then shows them how compost can be prepared.

Realizing that this and all the remaining films could have little entertainment value, Koritschoner proposed that we should endeavour to make them more interesting by providing a background of native music, since so much in native life is actually done to music. We tried out the

method with this film and it was clearly an improvement.

No. 24. *Coffee under Banana Shade* : One reel.

It had been decided that a film should be done on coffee, which is becoming an important native crop. The proposal was to do parts of the film in different coffee-growing areas, but as soon as work was begun on the film it was clear that this might lead to difficulties, so it was decided to do several short films on different coffee problems. The first demonstrated the planting of bananas ahead of the extension of a coffee garden in order to provide shade—a practice advocated in Tanganyika, but not in Uganda. This was a perfectly simple instructional film showing the process with a fair amount of detail.

No. 25. *High Yields from Selected Plants* : One reel.

This was another of the coffee problem series, and referred to the outcome of an important piece of research work performed at Lyamungu Coffee Research Station. It has been found that, taking the average European and African coffee garden, two-thirds of the crop is obtained from one-third of the plants, the reason being that the plants have not been grown from seed selected from high-yielding plants.

The film began with some shots of laboratory research work in progress and field research work, and then showed coffee being harvested, pulped and measured. Under six similar-looking coffee plants the yield from each was placed in cellophane

bags, enabling it to be clearly visible. This showed that most of the crop had come from two out of six of the plants. The film then went on to demonstrate that seedlings grown from the high-yielding plants resulted in high subsequent yields, and *vice versa*.

No. 26. *Coffee Marketing* : One reel.

. As we understood that we were to do a film showing marketing elsewhere, it was thought that it would be a good thing to show the advanced methods adopted at Moshi. This was a very simple film which showed the details of the marketing method under native management. It was largely based on experiences gained with film No. 8.

No. 27. *Msukuma Farmer* : Three reels.

This film was made near Mwanza on the south of Lake Victoria. It showed an ideal small holding where the owner was using agricultural implements for his cultivation. It was presented as a visit by the audience to the farm, the farmer acting as guide. In such films, although the producer is clear enough as to the whereabouts of the different things shown, the audience is, as a rule, unable to obtain any clear idea of the geography. To overcome this difficulty we adopted the method of making the farmer draw a rough plan of his farm in the soil outside his hut. He would point out the position of his cotton-field in relation to his hut on the plan, and then go there. When he had finished explaining his agricultural methods for cotton, he returned to the plan he had drawn, showed where

he had come from in relation to the hut and where he was going next. We used the plan later to discuss the economics of his farm, and again to explain, in what seems a particularly effective manner, the principle of crop rotation. In film No. 18 we had experimented for a similar purpose with the use of a plan drawn on the soil with a stick, and as the method had been successful it was adopted here more fully.

No. 28. *Farm Implements* : Two reels.

After completing the previous film it had been our intention to go to Shinyanga to make a film on anti-tsetse work, but dull weather and rain caused a delay in our schedule and we had to abandon this. Instead, we substituted a silent lecture-film on the use of farm implements. This showed the construction, adjustment and use of (i) the plough ; (ii) the ridger ; (iii) the cultivator ; and (iv) the large harrow. The film was divided into these four sections, and in each section the implement was first shown working, then the constructional details, and lastly a more elaborate section on its working. We are arranging for a lecture to be written to accompany the film, the idea being that each section would be one lecture, and the part of the film that is applicable would be repeated several times during the lecture.

No. 29. *Labour Conditions at Geita Mine* : Two reels.

Mr McMahon, the Provincial Commissioner of the Lake Province, suggested that as we were

making several films showing how Natives can profitably work their own land, we ought to include in our programme a film showing the other side—the Native working for wages. There was some footage left over from the allocation for Tanganyika, and as Mr McMahon could provide the necessary facilities we visited Geita Mine and made a film of the very modern and efficient labour conditions there. This film, which was not part of our contract for the Governments, was made specifically with the object of showing the attractive conditions for Natives working for enlightened employers in a modern labour camp, where good arrangements are made for housing, feeding, and the general contentment of the employees.

No. 30. *Agricultural Education at Bukalasa* : Eight reels.

This film was made at the Bukalasa Agricultural station and training centre, Uganda. A number of points were listed which it was thought might have instructional value if shown throughout the Buganda Province. The film was presented as a visit by the audience to see what the pupils were learning at Bukalasa.

Footage was available to take each instructional point at considerable length. The Agricultural Education Officer was interested in the manner, already described, in which crop rotation was explained in film No. 27, and desired us to repeat it in this film with particular application to the system of rotation desirable for Uganda. Nearly a whole reel was devoted to this, showing a complete

rotation over a period of six years, and the manner in which the crop lessened as the soil became tired. One point that it was specially desired to bring out was the necessity to improve the cleanliness of the cotton marketed. This was demonstrated by showing a European examining some cotton and finding it dirty. He called the pupils together and read them a letter that he had received from Liverpool. The scene then dissolved to the Liverpool office, showing the broker deciding that he could not buy some of the Uganda cottons, and that Uganda cotton would have to be graded lower unless it was sold cleaner. The picture dissolved back to the pupils listening to the letter being read, and the instructor was then told to show them the right way to secure clean cotton. The film finished with a visit of some Uganda chiefs to the school, where the previous instruction was reiterated by showing it briefly to the chiefs.

No. 31. *Uganda Boy Scouts* : Two reels.

This was a non-contract film on the usual lines showing activities of Boy Scouts. The second reel showed a cyclist injured in a motor accident and the Scouts rendering first aid.

No. 32. *Milk from Native Cows* : Four reels.

This was a more elaborate repetition of film No. 14, taken at Ngong, Kenya. The problem was treated in a series of stages in order not to confuse audiences by giving them too much that would be new to them. The first stage showed Kikuyu women milking a small herd of cows, the total

yield being two bottles.¹ The method, if not the people, would be familiar to most Natives, as well as the yield. The second stage showed a smaller native herd, and two of the cows being driven into a primitive stall where they were milked by a Native in European fashion. The milk from one cow was then measured and seen to be six and a half bottles. Something new was thus introduced, done by Natives, and interest was aroused as to how the high yield was obtained. In the third stage the main parts of the method were shown in detail. Following a picture of a cow which had just calved, the calf is shown being put into a roughly-made pen. The still wet calf is rubbed over with the little piece of hide which is the secret of the method. The piece of hide is taken to the cow, already in her milking stall, and she licks it vigorously, believing it to be the calf. Under this belief she lets down her milk for a time and then tends to dry up; the milker adds a few drops of milk to the piece of hide and lets her lick it again, when she gives more milk. For the next seven months or so he can obtain milk in this way, always allowing her to lick the original piece of hide—it must be the same piece. Her milk supply increases. A part of the milk is given to the calf after each milking.

The fourth stage begins by introducing the fact that the method will only work if begun with a cow's first calf. For this reason a Native should buy heifers. We showed the herd-owner buying such an animal and explaining its good points to his son.

¹ Empty whisky or other bottles are the usual native measure of milk quantity.

But the increased production of milk is of little use unless there is a market. Markets for milk only exist where there are big townships, unless the milk is converted to cream and thence to *ghee*¹ which finds a ready sale either for export or for local consumption. So the owner of the herd was shown as also the owner of a small separator with which he made cream. The scenes of the milking method and the feeding of the calves were repeated. It was seen that the older calves could be fed on skim milk and a little maize meal, which is cheaper than using whole milk with the consequent loss of cream. To emphasize the absolute necessity for the cleanliness of vessels used in feeding the calves, the young son was seen getting into trouble from his father for shirking his work. Later, the lad was seen giving the pail a thorough scalding and cleaning. Lastly, it was emphasized that with five selected cows on natural grazing there would be a revenue of £7, 10s. per annum from the sale of *ghee*. This figure was based on the milk records of many years from native cattle at the Ngong station. It suggests great possibilities for true mixed farming.

No. 33. *Cattle and Disease*: Two reels.

The facts about this film are told in Chapter VIII on Film Production.

No. 34. *Artificial Insemination of Cattle*: Two reels.

This is a silent lecture-film asked for by the Veterinary Department in Kenya, and is not intended

¹ Clarified butter.

for general audiences. The object is to show how herds could be improved by use of this method, owing to the greatly increased number of cows which can be served by a few good bulls. The film might be of use to overcome native prejudice towards anything so strange.

No. 35. *Marketing Export Native Maize*: Three
reels.

In this film the story is told of the Karatina market in Kenya. It opens with maize being sold, as it used to be, to wayside buyers, and the cheating that takes place. The cheating is discovered and an angry crowd proceeds to their chief to ask him to get help from the Government. He approaches the Agricultural Officer and is told that a marketing scheme will be inaugurated but that Natives must grow better maize, for which purpose he will issue free seed, provided they will promise to use it. The market as it appeared in 1934 is then shown and the simple form of maize-grader then in use. But owing to the hybridizing in the fields of improved and native maize, a great deal of sorting is necessary. The chief complains about this, and is told that the remedy lies in seed selection, namely, sowing only the right seed and not the mixed kind. Instructors go round explaining this, and in 1937 very little of the old maize comes into the market. The method of grading and selling is shown, and the maize is then seen on its way to Mombasa, the film concluding with scenes of its shipment.

CHAPTER IV

TOURING WITH THE FILMS

WE left our headquarters at Vugiri for the first tour on September 4th, 1935, the party consisting of two Europeans—Peter Woodall, projectionist, and G. C. Latham, educational director—and four Africans. These were Jackson, the driver, who is also no mean mechanic when necessity arises; his mate, Alphonse, a hefty but brainless youth with an insatiable appetite; and two personal servants, Hamedi and Mulishu. The former, a Yao from Fort Johnston in Nyasaland, had travelled over most of East and Central Africa from Bulawayo to Nairobi, working as cook and personal servant to a variety of masters, including Robert Codrington, first Administrator of N.E. Rhodesia in 1900. He found friends and relations wherever we went, and was most useful as an envoy and interpreter. Whether brow-beating or parleying with other Natives, or providing commentary to films, or holding forth through the microphone to assembled crowds, which gave him especial pleasure, he was never at a loss. Even in regard to mechanical troubles with engine and lorry, about which he knew nothing, he was always ready with advice. Mulishu came from a village near Tabora and this was his first experience of travelling. He proved most efficient and willing.

The *Post Office Savings Bank* with its exciting chase of the thief was and remains universally popular. Of the other films taken on our first tour, *Hides* aroused little interest as a rule and we only showed it among cattle-owning tribes. *Tanga Travel* was popular among natives who knew the locality, but with the exception of a few shots of more general interest, especially those of the initiation ceremony dance, it did not excite much interest farther afield; the reception of the others varied in different places. The farce was always popular with children, but met with a certain amount of disapproval from some of the older people, who thought it improper to show a small boy behaving with such disrespect towards his elders.

After showing at Handeni, Mpwapwa and Dodoma, where one of the loud-speakers failed, we reached Iringa. Here the wooden posts of the screen broke in a high wind and we had to fix up the screen against the *boma* verandah. This was not the only misfortune. The second loud-speaker gave out just before the film display was due to begin, after functioning well for nearly an hour while we played gramophone records and got local talent to amuse the assembling audience. The films had to be shown silent, with a brief explanation before each. Even so they were well received, although they cannot have been really understood by most of the audience.

Fortunately it was possible to get a new screen-frame made of one-inch piping by a local garage, and this proved a much more practical proposition than the lighter and more expensive wooden jointed

screen which is only suitable for sheltered positions. After another silent show at Malangali school, we reached Mbeya, where we were much cheered to find a new loud-speaker which had arrived by air-mail in response to an urgent telegram from Dodoma. From Mbeya we went to Tukuyu, formerly New Langenberg, set in lovely hilly country, where the average rainfall is over 100 inches per annum and all is green. Here much interest was shown in the films by the District Officer, Mr Huggins, brother of the Prime Minister in S. Rhodesia, and by Mr and Mrs Godfrey Wilson, both well-known anthropologists, all of whom sent valuable criticisms and suggestions.

At all displays I endeavoured to arrange for competent European observers to be present and to report to me later on the reactions of the Africans to the films. In this way a vast amount of useful information was accumulated. Officials, missionaries, anthropologists, and educated Africans were the chief contributors. Their reports were based partly on their own impressions, partly on the questioning of Natives after the display.

Returning to Mbeya, we showed there, and the following morning crossed the border into N. Rhodesia. It was a joy to me to get back to the territory in which I had served for twenty years. Our first visit was to that grand old missionary, the late Dr Chisholm, at Mwenzo. Here we were joined by the Provincial Superintendent of Native Education, Mr Miller, and he and his wife accompanied us throughout the tour in this province, giving valuable help. The display at Mwenzo was marred by trouble

with the engine, which caused irritating delays. The same trouble occurred at Abercorn the following day and was diagnosed as a weak spark. Mr Moffatt, the Agricultural Officer, and others had taken considerable pains to make our arrival known, and we had a good audience of some 500 Africans and 25 Europeans. The engine trouble was therefore particularly unfortunate. We always found that the Africans took delays and other troubles with a philosophic indifference. They enjoy gathering together apart from the show itself and like opportunities for conversation. Europeans are not so long-suffering. Many of the Africans took an embarrassing interest in our efforts to make the engine function.

Before leaving Abercorn the following day we paid a visit to the Kalambo Falls a few miles away, where I took some shots with a cine-camera—possibly the first moving pictures that have been taken of these beautiful falls.

After a night at the London Missionary Society station at Senga Hill, we reached Kasama, the headquarters of the province. Here we had arranged to spend three nights, our first rest since leaving Vugiri, and we had chosen a good spot. The European inhabitants of Kasama at that time, numbering about fifty, seemed to specialize in attractive wives with unusually pretty names, and there was a general atmosphere of gaiety and goodwill, which is rare in a small and somewhat isolated community. There were also several visitors. Heads of departments like to tour in N.E. Rhodesia in the month of September and we were fortunate to

meet here the Directors of Education and Medical Services. On the second day we gave a successful show to a most appreciative audience, after which we attended a large supper party given by Mr and Mrs Miller, where we played some records through our amplifier, and danced.

At the Kasama Government School for Natives the boys acted a folk-story for me to film. The imitations of monkeys and tortoises were particularly good.

We visited the White Fathers Mission at Malole, where Chitinukulu, Paramount Chief of the Bemba tribe, attended the show ; and Shiwa Ng'andu, the beautiful estate of Colonel Gore-Browne, where he distils essential oils. At Lubwa, a Church of Scotland mission, an excellent boys' school is run on Scout lines. Here on the day following the show I took several shots of the Scouts performing various manœuvres and war-dances on their sports ground. Then we went to camp near the lovely Chipoma Falls, where we had a "camp fire," and next morning I got some more shots of the Scouts signalling, building a monkey bridge over the river, and bathing.

Travelling via Mpika, Serenje and Kapiri Mposhi to Ndola, we had trouble with the tyres of the trailer. One of them was worn out completely and we had to put the trailer bodily on the lorry from Serenje onwards, causing great congestion. At Ndola we were able to get motor-cycle tyres to fit the trailer.

Ndola is the administrative headquarters of the Copper Belt. We were a little anxious lest the

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Natives on the mines and in the townships here, accustomed to seeing standard-sized professional films in the mine compounds, might be a little contemptuous of our early efforts, but this did not prove to be the case. The first night at Ndola we showed in the native recreation hall, heavy rain having fallen in the afternoon. This was the first display indoors and the first for which a charge—1d. a head—was made, the money being given for native welfare purposes. We found that the equipment had suffered badly from the terrible road between Kapiri and Ndola—"93 miles of corrugated ruts" is the perhaps rather bad-tempered comment in my diary. We had to show without the sound, but this would have been inaudible in any case owing to the din which went on. I gave the commentary myself in English to an African clerk, Ernest Muwamba, who retailed it most successfully through the microphone in Bemba. The noisy crowd of about 400 in the hall was difficult to control, though the caretaker, with the curious name of Adam Frog, did his best. The whole performance seemed very popular.

We had not intended to show the following evening, but a deputation waited on the District Commissioner with an earnest request that another display should be given. Rather reluctantly, as I wished to rest the staff, I agreed, the staff being apparently keen to function. The apparatus had to be thoroughly overhauled during the day, and at 8.30 p.m. we showed in the open air to about 2000 Africans and 4 Europeans. We generally found that in towns with a cinema very few Europeans

came to see our pictures, whereas elsewhere most of the European population turned out.

Further displays at Roan Antelope, Nkana and Mufulira mines all proved that the poor technical quality of our first films did not affect their popularity even with more sophisticated audiences. The subject-matter and African background of the pictures had an appeal for the Native which is lacking in the western-made films which they are accustomed to see. Improved technical quality is essential and has been attained to a large extent in our later films ; but it remains true that for the great bulk of African audiences at the present time the subject-matter is of far greater importance than the technical quality of the films.

After leaving Mufulira I developed 'flu, and on arrival at Broken Hill went straight to bed, while Woodall went out with Mr Peacock, the District Officer, to put up the screen for the show that night. He returned in an hour or two, however, also stricken with 'flu and a high temperature, and the show had to be abandoned. Next day, October 10th, we were both put into hospital. I was allowed to go to Lusaka on the 14th, but Woodall had to wait another two days. At Lusaka, where we stayed with Capt. and Mrs Ockendon, I was joined by my wife and daughter, who had flown from England. Henceforward we travelled in a Chevrolet, which was a pleasant change after the lorry.